



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COUNTY HONORS OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS *Ceremony Recognizes Efforts of Thousands of County Residents*

Every Saturday morning, "Miss Pat" can be found at the Polinsky Children's Center, where she holds and rocks babies who have been abused, neglected or abandoned.

Pat Cunningham of San Diego, one of thousands of San Diego County residents who volunteer their time with County programs, will be honored as one of the County's volunteers of the year on Wednesday, April 21, during a ceremony at the downtown County Administration Center, 1600 Pacific Highway. The ceremony begins at 8 a.m. and will be held in the Board of Supervisors' chamber on the third floor.

Other volunteers of the year to be honored include Armando "Monty" Morales of Cardiff-by-the-Sea, a volunteer mentor with the Welfare-to-Work program, and Elyse Kuhn and Joan Gansert of Ramona, who raised \$1.1 million in contributions for a new Ramona branch library. Morales' duties include talking with clients, sometimes late at night and on weekends, and helping them with a variety of tasks, all aimed at helping them become self-sufficient. Kuhn and Gansert's efforts to raise matching funds helped Ramona become eligible for a Prop. 14 grant from the state that would help pay for construction of a new library, if the application is successful.

In all, 32 volunteers of the year will be honored Wednesday for a variety of contributions, from clearing burned parks after last fall's wildfires to working with mental health patients and caring for dogs and cats at the County's animal shelters.

During the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2003, the last year for which complete figures are available, a total of 16,664 people volunteered with County programs. Based on a nationally recognized formula, their work had a total monetary value of \$24,109,539.

Anyone interested in volunteering with the County can call the County's volunteer coordinator, Grace Andoh, at (619) 531-5616.

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